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MEMORANDUM

The US, the USSR, and the Issue of Nonproliferation1. Why a nonproliferation treaty?

Since the partial test ban treaty was signed in 1963, the negotiation of a nonproliferation treaty has been the outstanding disarmament issue before the countries in the world. The question is vitally important to both the Western powers and the Communist powers. The countries with the most to gain are the US, the USSR, and to a lesser extent Britain. The acquisition of a nuclear capability by other countries--whether allies, enemies, or neutrals--would increase the chances that questions of peace and war would be decided by others. The possibility of nuclear war breaking out by accident or miscalculation would be greater than it is today. Even a weak country by present-day standards could become a major threat to the peace. France and Communist China also have a vital interest in nonproliferation. They, like the US, the USSR, and Britain, have nothing to gain from other countries achieving a nuclear potential.

2. What is the attitude of France and Communist China?

Neither Paris nor Peking is likely to sign a nonproliferation treaty. The present French Government probably views a nonproliferation treaty as a US effort to isolate France. Peking no doubt holds a similar position. Peking would also charge that a nonproliferation treaty was a collusive US-Soviet effort aimed at isolating China and curbing its nuclear development.

3. What is the attitude of the USSR?

The USSR, as the second leading nuclear power, is as interested as the US in foreclosing membership in the "nuclear club." Despite this interest, the Soviets have virtually stood still for over a year in this field, partly because of Vietnam, but mainly

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because of their overriding concern with the question of nuclear weapons and Germany. Soviet interest in a formal nonproliferation agreement has no doubt increased during this period, but Moscow is more concerned that West Germany acquire no voice in the use of nuclear weapons. Soviet leaders, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] have stressed the theme that West Germany, above everything else, must be prevented from getting a finger on the nuclear trigger. Given the current difficulties in NATO (and even without them), the US would find it difficult to sign anything that could be construed in Bonn as being discriminatory. Moscow is likely to continue its resistance to any agreement that did not meet its concerns without qualification.

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4. When the US points to the possibility of India going nuclear--opening the way to a Sino-Indian nuclear confrontation--and the dangers involved for the rest of the world in such an event, the Soviets do not show much concern. Similarly, they are not impressed when the US notes the possibility of Israel and the UAR going nuclear and what this development could mean for world peace.

5. The Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC) will soon convene again. The session earlier this year found the Soviets opposed to the US draft because in their view it did not clearly preclude an MLF, ANF, or any other jointly owned NATO force. We can expect them to continue to adhere to this view in the foreseeable future.

6. What is the attitude of India?

One of the most interesting developments at the last ENDC session was India's critical appraisal of both the Soviet and US draft treaties on nonproliferation. The Indians consistently made the point that the two drafts put more obligations on the nonnuclear powers than the nuclear powers. The pressures on the Indian leaders to "go nuclear" increase proportionately with each Chinese test. This probably accounts in large measure for the less enthusiastic Indian appraisal of a nonproliferation treaty than was the case prior to Chinese testing.

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7. Who is likely to sign a nonproliferation treaty?

It is probably true, however, that India at this time would sign a nonproliferation treaty, if the US and the USSR could agree on the wording. Most countries, in fact, would probably sign. West Germany could be expected to oppose East German adherence, but in the end would accept it under the same conditions as prevailed for adherence to the partial test ban treaty. We could expect the same powers that refused to sign the partial test ban treaty to take a similar position on a nonproliferation treaty. France and Communist China would not sign for reasons cited earlier. Albania, North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba would probably turn down the treaty. The first three would oppose the treaty because of Communist China's position. Castro has ruled out any treaty on nuclear issues because of what he considers US hostility toward his regime and US refusal to undertake a commitment not to station nuclear weapons in the Caribbean area including Puerto Rico.

8. Would any countries subsequently withdraw?

The nonproliferation treaty would no doubt include a withdrawal clause similar to the one incorporated into the partial test ban treaty. Thus, even though most countries would probably sign it, each country would in the end have the chance to renounce it should it consider that its security interests were "jeopardized." It should be noted that no country that signed the partial test ban treaty has since renounced it. Chinese testing since that treaty, however, has complicated all nuclear issues, and makes the situation particularly difficult for India.

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